

## **B.C.- Alberta Social Economy Research Alliance (BALTA)**

### **Project A6 – Fraser Valley Social Economy Research**

#### **Required Information**

- A. Title of project:** The Fraser Valley<sup>1</sup> social economy with reference to affordable housing<sup>2</sup> provision and related support services<sup>3</sup>.
- B. With which BALTA SERC is this project associated? SERC 1**  
**Or is it a cross cutting project?**
- C. Lead researcher, organization name and contact information:** Dr. Ron van Wyk, Provincial Program Director, Mennonite Central Committee of British Columbia, 31414 Marshall Rd, PO Box 2038, Abbotsford, BC, V2T 3T8. Tel: 604-850-6639; Cell: 604-302-6156; email: [rvanwyk@mccbc.com](mailto:rvanwyk@mccbc.com)
- D. Names of other researchers and organizations involved:** Dr. Anita van Wyk, Social, Culture and Media Studies, University of the Fraser Valley, Abbotsford. Sherril Guthrie, Cuthrie Consulting and Stacey Corriveau, Director, BC Centre for Social Enterprise, Abbotsford.
- E. Description of project, including objectives, outputs and intended outcomes:**  
This research project will provide a portrait of the nature, dynamics and extent of the social economy in the Fraser Valley, specifically with regard to the provisioning of affordable housing and concomitant support services. The objectives of the research project are to:

#### **Objectives:**

- Provide a description of what is affordable housing and what contribution does it and the related social economy housing providers make economically, and socially to the community/region they serve.
- Provide an inventory of affordable housing and related social economy housing provision organizations in the FVRD.
- Describe the nature, dynamics and extent of the social economy in FVRD as it relates to affordable housing and related support service delivery including, for example, an analysis of number of people employed in this sector, annual budget, revenue, number of clients served, per capita cost

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<sup>1</sup> For the purpose of this research project the Fraser Valley refers the eastern part of valley, i.e. the geographic area of jurisdiction of the Fraser Valley Regional District, focusing on the communities of Abbotsford, Mission, Chilliwack, Agassiz-Harrison, Hope, Boston Bar – North Bend.

<sup>2</sup> In this proposal, the term “affordable housing” refers to housing that is publicly owned and funded or publicly supported, either through capital or operating funds. It also refers to non-profit housing and subsidized development of new rental housing stock. It does not include affordability on the market side.

<sup>3</sup> The notion “related support services” in this proposal refers to support services linked to affordable housing and provided by affordable housing providers.

of service delivery, asset base, leveraging of assets and opportunities for expansion, etc.<sup>4</sup>

- Analyze supply of affordable housing and related support services relative to demand based on, for example, inventory of existing social housing stock, waiting lists for affordable housing, consumer income levels in relation to cost of market-based housing, percentage of household income spent on housing, etc.<sup>5</sup>
- Identify and describe support services that are necessary to make affordable housing successful.
- Identify and describe the policy and program changes necessary to enhance the provision of affordable housing e.g. (1) policies related to housing development, including municipal and regional plans, provincial and federal funding support, availability of financing; (2) policies related to affordable housing social economy enterprises (NGOs); (3) policies related to affordable housing support services.

### **Outputs:**

- Literature review on what constitute affordable housing and the relation of the affordable housing social economy to community vibrancy, etc.
- Using BC Housing data, regional social planning data, and field data develop and inventory of existing affordable housing and related support services.
- Research report on the nature, dynamics and extent of the social economy in the Fraser Valley with reference to affordable housing and related support services.
- Position paper on (1) defining the social economy and (2) the role of the social economy as the third sector in economies, in addition to the private and public sectors.
- Conference/symposium papers
- Journal articles
- Completed BALTA online social economy survey by organizations that are interviewed

### **Intended outcomes:**

- Contribution to the growing body of knowledge in Canada on the social economy
- Cultivating awareness and broader knowledge within the for-profit sector, not-for-profit sector and the public sector including local, provincial and federal officials and politicians of the extent and role of the social economy in the Fraser Valley

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<sup>4</sup> Achieving this objective will in part be facilitated by using existing and tested BALTA mapping and case study templates.

<sup>5</sup> Achieving an accurate picture of demand may be difficult given the fact that demand is population based (e.g. developmental disabilities), based on a combination of demographics and income (e.g. seniors), economically focused e.g. low income or socially based (e.g. transition housing). Census data is also not a reliable source of demand either. Furthermore, waiting lists may contain duplications. Thus, findings with regard to demand may need to be presented with the necessary qualifiers.

- Improved understanding among researchers, practitioners, policy makers, officials, and community leaders of the relation between the social economy and social inclusion, community safety, community health and vibrancy.
- Legitimized community based action plan to address identified gaps and guide concomitant advocacy in respect of identified social policy changes necessary for more efficient and effective service delivery and policy changes that will facilitate scaled up public and private investment in affordable housing including leveraging of resources available at local and regional level.

**F. Purpose and significance of the research, including congruence with the strategic research objectives identified for the SERC and BALTA.**

The purpose of the research is to determine and describe the scope and characteristics of the social economy in the Fraser Valley with specific reference to affordable housing and related support service delivery.

In the process the research will:

- contribute to a better understanding of the social economy landscape in the Fraser Valley;
- provide an overview of the scope and nature of demonstrable socio-economic derivations of the social economy;
- identify key issues, opportunities, resources and constraints in relation to the scaling up of the social economy;
- contribute to public policy debate and political discourse with respect to the social economy.

**G. Will the project involve student researchers in a paid or unpaid capacity? If yes, will they need to be recruited or have they already been identified? Briefly describe the roles and responsibilities of students involved in the research project, the skills/experience they will acquire, and how this will complement their academic training. Explain as well how adequate supervision and support of the student will be ensured.**

It is proposed that one student from the University of the Fraser Valley be recruited for involvement in the research project. The student will, under supervision of the lead researcher assist with literature review, data collection, analysis and report writing. In the process the student will acquire skills and obtain experience with regard to literature review, data mining and collection, data analysis, and presentation of research findings including report writing. Working on a research project under the direct supervision of the research team will enable the student to further develop his/her research skills and expand his/her research knowledge.

Supervised participation in an applied research project that focuses on the place and role of the social economy as a third sector within the economy will also expand the student's knowledge of the social economy. The student will be part of the research team and as such work under the tutelage of the researchers within a supported learning environment facilitated by regular participation in research team discussions and ongoing monitoring of progress with respect to the research project.

## H. Research activities, plan of work and timetable:

Research activities include:

- literature review
- stakeholder meetings
- interviews with key informants
- focus groups with stakeholders
- interviews with representatives of identified and relevant social economy organizations
- data analysis
- research report writing

Timetable:

1. April 09 – May 09: Recruitment of research assistant, clarifying the purpose, scope and objectives of the research, clarifying the roles of members of the research team and finalize research design including research methods, procedures and techniques.
2. June 09 – Nov 09: Literature review and data collection.
3. Dec 09 – Feb 2010: Data analysis and report writing.
4. March 2010 – May 2010: Dissemination of findings

Role of Lead researcher:

- Liaise with BALTA and SERC 1
- Report progress to BALTA and SERC 1
- Approve selection of research assistant
- Provide overall leadership and direction to the research project
- Call and facilitate research team meetings
- Conduct focus groups
- Take the lead on data analysis and report writing
- Provide day to day supervision to research assistant

Role of Co-researchers:

- Develop inventory of affordable housing and related support services
- Provide guidance to research assistant with regard to literature review and assist overall with literature review
- In consultation with lead researcher develop and finalize research methods and tools
- Conduct interviews with key informants and representatives of identified social economy organizations
- Work with the lead researcher on position papers, data analysis and report writing

## I. Describe plans for communicating research results within the academic community. Indicate audience and specific output(s) i.e., refereed journal articles, conference presentations or other appropriate channels.

Research results will be disseminated by means of:

- Research report to be published through UFV Press and/or others
- Two refereed journal articles (appropriate journals to be selected)
- Presentations at research colloquiums, workshops, seminars and conferences

**J. Describe plans for communicating research results outside the academic community to practitioners, policy makers, and other people for whom the research results could be significant. Indicate audience and specific output(s).**

- Presentations to local, regional, provincial and federal officials and politicians
- Presentations to practitioner groups and community stakeholders

**K. Describe your plans for monitoring and evaluating your research project. Feel free to consult with BALTA's Coordinator on designing possible approaches. (Note that monitoring and evaluation are extremely important both for ensuring the success of the project as well as satisfying reporting to SSHRC.)**

- Quarterly report to SERC 1 and BALTA regarding project progress compared to agreed timeline and objectives
- Project final report to SERC 1 and BALTA confirming completion of proposed outputs
- Student evaluations by both the student and supervisor using BALTA approved formats
- An end of project evaluation involving project partners and participants to assess extent to which project objectives, outputs and outcomes have been realized
- Medium term follow-up report, 6 - 12 months after project completion, involving a sample of organizations to obtain their assessment of project results including impact of outcomes and potential for further project impact

**L. What are the research tools you propose to use in your project?**

**NOTE: If your research involves human subjects, you MUST provide copies of your proposed research tools (as well as your research plan) prior to commencing research. Please see the document "*BALTA Ethical Review Process – Simplified*" for information about ethical review requirements.**

Research tools to be used include:

- Self-administered structured questionnaire containing closed and open-ended questions.
- Semi-structured interview schedule for use by researchers during interviews with participants including representatives of social economy enterprises.
- BALTA's on-line social economy survey questionnaire

## M. Budget and Contributions

Category	Requested of BALTA	Other Contributions
Student salaries	\$10,400.00	
Student benefits/overhead costs (if the student will be a CCCR hire, add 10.5% of the student salaries amount; if the student will be employed by another institution, add the relevant amount)	\$1,092.00 – student to be CCCR employed but recruited by project leads from University of the Fraser Valley	
Researchers' Time		\$10,000 FVRD cash contribution \$5,000 in-kind from BC Social Enterprise Centre \$15,000 in-kind from MCC BC
Research Support Costs (e.g. supplies, communication costs)	\$1,000.00	
Knowledge Dissemination	\$1,600.00	
Travel	\$2,000.00	
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$16,092.00</b>	<b>\$30,000.00 *</b>

### Budget explanation

#### Student salaries & benefits

2 Students to be employed by CCCR for 25hr/wk @ \$16/hr x 13 weeks plus holiday pay plus EI/ CPP/WCB = \$10,400 + \$1,092.00 = \$11,492.00

#### Researcher time

\$10,000 cash contribution from FVRD to pay two researchers, Dr. Anita van Wyk and Sherril Guthrie

\$5,000 in-kind contribution from BC Centre for Social Enterprise for Stacey Corriveau's time

\$15,000 in-kind contribution from MCC BC for lead researcher's time.

#### Research Support Costs

Paper, printer cartridges, electronic filing devices, folders and files, copying/duplicating costs, telephone costs including conference calls, etc. = \$1,000.00

#### Knowledge dissemination

Report writing, editing, duplication costs = \$1,600.00

#### Travel

Return airfares to attend conference as part of knowledge dissemination \$1,200.00 plus 2000 km car travel @ \$0.40/km = \$800.00

#### Total Other Contributions

\* \$10,000 cash; \$20,000 in-kind